

Submitter: Emily Polanshek
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick, Co-Vice-Chairs Boshart Davis and Boquist, and committee members,

My name is Emily Polanshek, I live in SW Portland and am a mother, grandmother and am retired from Canby School District where I taught elementary school. I care deeply about children, the advancing climate crisis and the need to address all manner of climate impacts that are unjustly distributed. I volunteer locally with Metro Climate Action Team, 350pdx and the social justice committee of Portland's Jewish Renewal congregation, P'nai Or.

I support replacing the I-5 bridge with a new, seismically-safe bridge that includes light rail, bus service and safe multi-modal forms of transportation. I oppose the current "Locally Preferred Alternative." The current design and scope of the project is way too costly, the bridge is too high, and the planned roadway extensions needed for such a high bridge encroach on communities more miles than I believe is beneficial for the health of those who live near them.

I understand that the current design, while too high for many cyclists and far too dominant a feature on land and riverscapes, is still not high enough to meet the Coast Guard's requested minimum height. For these reasons, I oppose HB 2098 -2 and -4 because this legislation as currently written would jeopardize a right-sized bridge replacement, right now.

I am in favor of the -3 amendment introduced by Rep. Pham as an impressive start to correcting the above problems. I encourage the committee to build on this progress and pass a bill that ensures that the project moves forward smoothly with explicit pro-labor and community benefits provisions, financial guardrails with oversight mechanisms to avoid cost overruns and major investments in mass transit.

Many studies have shown that freeway expansions do not alleviate congestion. Rather, they generate more traffic and congestion; along with these, they send more climate pollution into the atmosphere and more air pollution at ground level. I urge you as legislators to request smaller bridge design options. Consider congestion tolling which may be what is needed to decrease congestion, not punitive tolling to pay for a far-too costly bridge. Please support an IBR that is more financially responsible so that Oregon can fund other needed projects and services.

Let's replace the current bridge with a right-sized bridge that includes forward-

thinking multimodal transportation features. Let's demand that a primary goal of the design be fossil gas emission reductions. Let's plan together for a healthier future of our communities and the atmosphere we all share.

I'd like to end by expressing my gratitude to all of you, Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick, Co-Vice-Chairs Boshart Davis and Boquist, and committee members, for considering testimony, thinking about and working on this measure. You are doing important work.

Thank you, Emily Polanshek